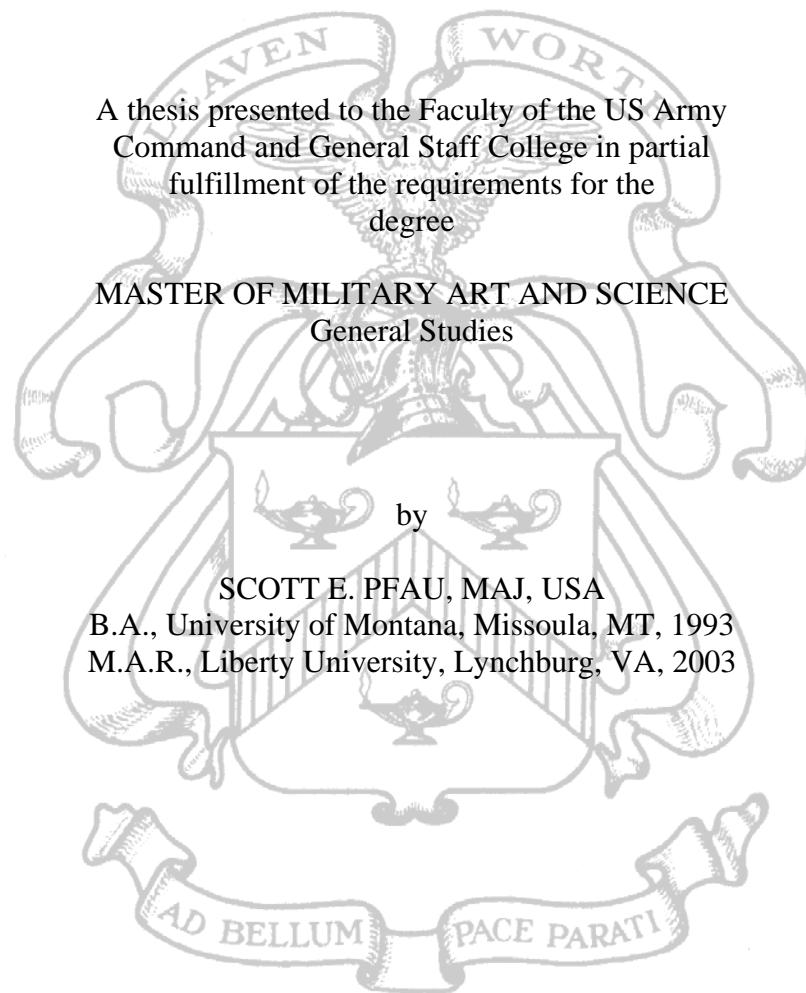


THE NEZ PERCE FLIGHT TO CANADA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEZ PERCE-US
CAVALRY CONFLICTS: APPLYING HISTORICAL LESSONS LEARNED
TO MODERN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND GLOBAL WAR
ON TERRORISM OPERATIONS



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ABSTRACT

THE NEZ PERCE FLIGHT TO CANADA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEZ PERCE-US CAVALRY CONFLICTS: APPLYING HISTORICAL LESSONS LEARNED TO MODERN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM OPERATIONS, by MAJ Scott E. Pfau, 81 pages.

This study details the Nez Perce's struggle and offers a historical case study for unconventional warfare. This study proposes to answer the questions: Why did the US Army fail to achieve decisive victory over the Nez Perce in 1877; and What lessons can be taken from this historical case and applied to today's wars. Considering the history of unconventional warfare in the United States, specifically the Indian Wars, it is vital that the modern day warrior look to the lessons of the past, specifically the 1877 US Cavalry pursuit of the Nez Perce. Many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by the modern day warriors often derive from lessons learned in early US military confrontations, such as the Nez Perce, and are applicable to today's Global War on Terrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The US Cavalry's clash with the Nez Perce provides an excellent case study. Their battles forced the Nez Perce Indians and their horses to flee on a perilous journey that sent them 1,600-miles throughout the vast Northwest of the United States. The Nez Perce skillfully eluded the US Cavalry through means of deception, flexibility, and guerilla tactics. Additionally, the Nez Perce possessed superior mobility, enjoyed an adaptive logistics system, and demonstrated battle proven leadership. Conversely, the US Army during this time was a relatively small force, significantly drawn down since the US Civil War. Among this Army were many inexperienced soldiers who lacked proper training, and older officers who, at times, struggled with the physical demands associated with pursuing and fighting against the unorthodox Nez Perce warriors. These soldiers often misunderstood their enemy's culture, their will, and lacked sound procedures for man hunting. These misunderstandings often resulted in miscalculations and underestimations that greatly prolonged their ultimate victory. A sound study of the many US cavalry and Nez Perce engagements enables the modern day warrior with the necessary tools for victory in modern combat.

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ACRONYMS

GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
PONI	persons of national interest

ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Often it serves to reflect on history to find directions for the future.¹

John O. Marsh Jr., Interbranch Relations

In order to maximize their effectiveness, professional military leaders must consolidate all they have learned, experienced, and studied. With this knowledge, they must formulate basic principles and processes that allow them to accomplish any assigned task or mission. Army field manuals teach that leadership is achieved through a mastery of analyzing the art and science of the problem.² With this in mind, a continuous study of the fundamentals in the art and science of military history benefits is crucial to military professionals today. The study of military history provides insights and reasons for the successes and failures of past conflicts. These studies provide superb lessons for what went right, what went wrong, and then offer methods to correct the problems or sustain the successes.

This especially holds true in examining unconventional warfare and its past episodes. Unconventional warfare adds the unique dimensions of personalities, culture, and internal organizational processes to the usual order of battle factors studied in conventional warfare, which include composition, disposition, strength, tactics, training, logistics support, combat effectiveness, and personalities.³ Together, these elements and their historical study are essential for success on today's battlefield.

The United States is a country at war; engaged in a conflict that continues to change. Today's enemy is unconventional, or "guerilla-like," and no longer operates in a

set pattern; “Guerrilla warfare operates with small, mobile and flexible combat groups called cells, without a front line. Guerrilla warfare is one of the oldest forms of asymmetric warfare.”⁴ With the enemy incorporating guerilla warfare as primary tactic, the US military may never have the opportunity to use the pre-determined templates of the past dispositions during planning and conducting war operations now and in the future, but this does not exempt their study. In today’s contemporary operational environment, flexibility and innovation are keys for success, and to aid in maximizing these characteristics, US military leaders must examine their military past. In doing so they will find former warriors whose successes in unconventional warfare were based on their flexibility, innovation, and a special understanding of their enemy’s culture.

The leaders of these units understand their missions, they know the demands that would be required and select the best men available for their units. These men were highly disciplined, dedicated and truly professionals at waging unconventional warfare. Bold and innovative, their rules for tactics were more often than not based upon their own personal experiences. They were men who knew the enemy as well as themselves and continually did the unexpected.⁵

This holds true of today’s elite warriors, and these tried and true qualities will facilitate success for today’s unconventional fight and the ongoing Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). One key historical episode, in which many of these factors are present, is the US military’s conflict with its Native Americans. Many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures taught to the modern day warriors come from lessons learned in these early confrontations with the Native Americans. This intriguing fact leads to the purpose of this historical study. In preparing for current, counterinsurgency and GWOT operations, most notably in Afghanistan and Iraq, can the US military learn valuable lessons from the Nez Perce-US cavalry conflicts of the past?

The purpose of this thesis is to examine lessons learned in a case study from the historical Nez Perce-US cavalry conflict most notably in the areas of logistics, transportation and leadership. It will also explore the aspects of will of the people, culture-alliances that are the sources of strength, power, and resistance and man hunting with respect to this same conflict, and the overall goal will be to apply these historical lessons learned to today's ongoing counterinsurgency and GWOT operations in an effort to aid modern military officers. It will also provide beneficial insight into logistics, discussed in chapter 2, weapons and tactical considerations discussed in chapter 3, and leadership, discussed in chapter 4 (innovation, flexibility, culture, and others). Additionally, this study will provide today's military leaders some of the lessons learned from the US Cavalry and Nez Perce conflict applicable in current counterinsurgency and GWOT operations.

The Nez Perce played a pivotal role in the history of the northwest. The Nez Perce were a peaceful Indian nation spread from Idaho to Northern Washington. The tribe had maintained good relations with the whites after the Lewis and Clark expedition. One of the members of the Nez Perce tribe, Young Joseph spent much of his early childhood at a mission the Christian missionaries maintained. In 1855, Young Joseph's father, Old Joseph, signed a treaty with the US that allowed his people to retain most of their traditional lands. In 1863, the US government negotiated another treaty that severely reduced the amount of land, but Old Joseph maintained that his people never agreed to this second treaty. Thirteen years passed in relative peace. Then, after Young Joseph assumed his role as Chief in 1877, a showdown occurred over the second non-treaty. This clash with the US military forced over 800 Nez Perce men, women, and children, and

2,000 horses to flee, which sent them on a 1,600-mile journey through the modern states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana.

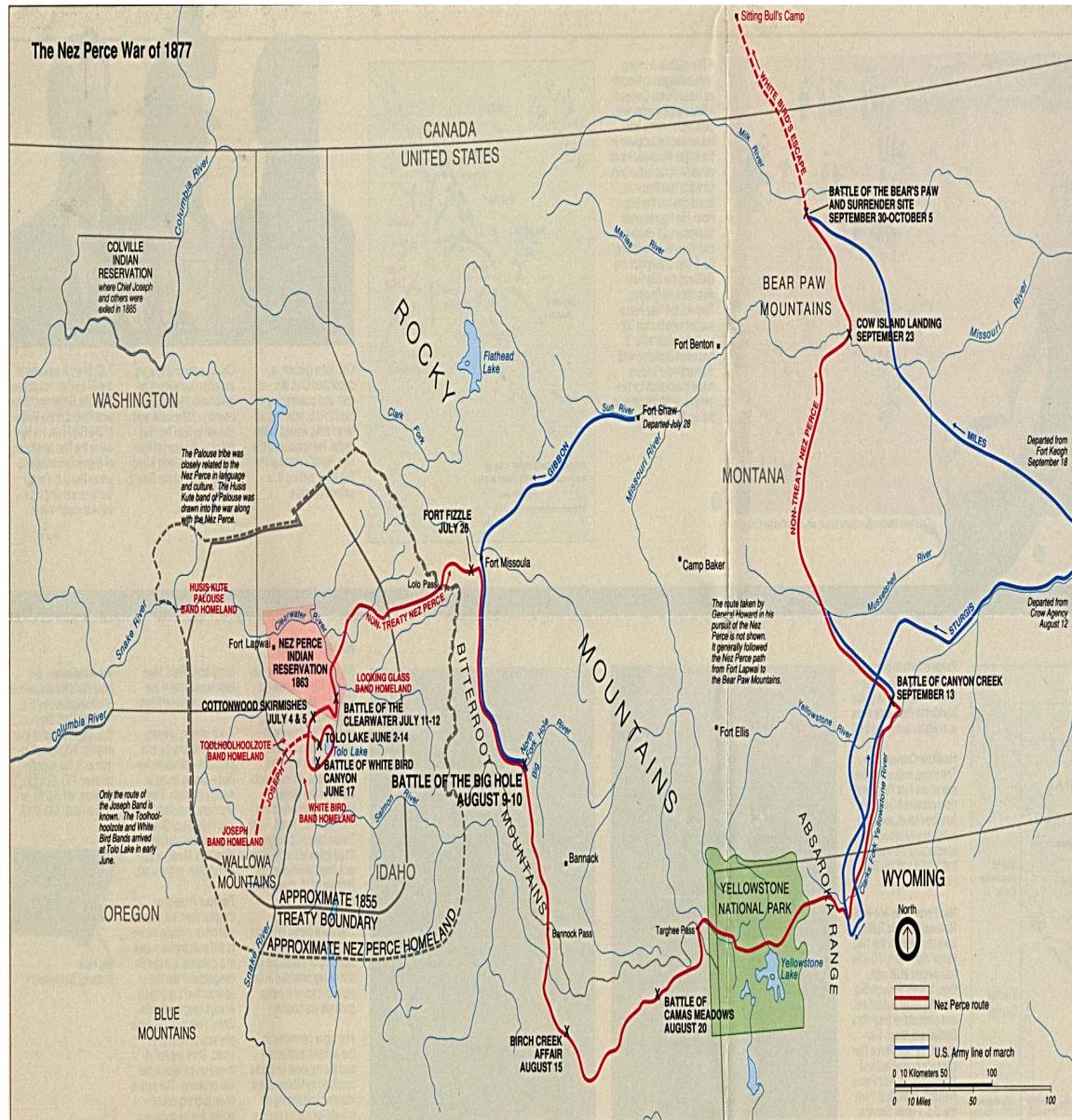


Figure 1. Map of The Nez Perce War of 1877

Source: Velma Nieberding, "The Nez Perce in the Quapaw Agency, 1878-1879." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* (Spring 1966): 34.

During the exodus, the Nez Perce displayed incredible skill in outmaneuvering and out battling their aggressors. The US military was relentless in their pursuit, but in an incredible feat of courage and skill the Nez Perce defeated, eluded, and outdistanced the troops for nearly four months. The journey ended near the Bear Paw Mountains on the Canadian border with freedom only a short forty miles away. After a devastating five-day battle, freezing weather conditions with no food or blankets, Chief Joseph surrendered on 5 October 1877. Many of the warriors were dead, horses were lost, and most of the Nez Perce were taken prisoner or forced into exile. Even though he was their enemy, Major General O. O. Howard, leader of the US Cavalry, was impressed with the skill with which the Nez Perce fought, especially the use of advance and rear guard, skirmish lines, and field fortifications. Despite being outnumbered, outgunned, and burdened with noncombatants, the Nez Perce repeatedly prevailed and evaded the Army. They did this even as they withdrew along a well-traveled route known as the Lolo Trail and into the Bitterroot Mountains territory of Montana before exhaustion finally forced them to surrender. Eventually, the US government allowed some members of the Nez Perce tribe to return to their land, but they forced others to live on the nearby Colville Indian Reservation in Washington State. There, Chief Joseph remained with a group of his people and did what he could to encourage and preserve his tribe.

This study proposes to answer these questions: Why did the US Army fail to achieve decisive victory over the Nez Perce in 1877? and What lessons can be taken from this historical case and applied to today's wars. Furthermore, this study will inspect the logistics, weapons, tactical considerations, and leadership used at both the tactical and operational levels and attempts to provide reasons for successes and failures and how

they apply to modern US counterinsurgency efforts. The success of the Nez Perce against the US military during the numerous engagements shocked the US government and demonstrated how poor logistics, leadership, weapons, and ignorance of culture contributed to the Army's failures during the Nez Perce War. Additionally, this campaign illustrated how effective the Indians were at compensating for inferior numbers and firepower by using deception, flexibility, and guerrilla tactics.

Like other Indian Wars in the late 1800s, the Nez Perce War involved two very different groups with very different outlooks on land rights, civilian authority, government powers, social organization, and the responsibilities of the individuals to society. Because of the many similarities with today's fight, it is an excellent case study with valuable lessons learned. In the current fight, the US is engaged with effective insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq who compensate for their inferior numbers and firepower by using deception, flexibility, and other tactics. In contrast the insurgents use cell phones for command and control, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) for firepower and effects, and the Internet as a recruiting tool and effort to win the "will of the people." All are unique forms of guerrilla tactics mingled with modern technology, and although it was over a century ago, mimic similar Nez Perce innovation, flexibility, and tactics.

For centuries, the Nez Perce had lived in the Northwest as a strong, wealthy, and free; yet by 1876 they were fighting for their very survival. Horace Axtell, the Nez Perce's spiritual leader is quoted as saying:

They really didn't want the war; they were just trying to get away. But still, the government and the soldiers, they wanted to put them where they thought they belonged. So that is why they pursued them and went to bring 'em back, and bring 'em back and make 'em, force 'em to be something else.⁶

It is rather ironic that the Nez Perce greeted Lewis and Clark with open arms only to find out seventy years later that they were going to battle over the land upon which they were walking with the same people they welcomed. These eventual battles generate many questions and provide many lessons learned for modern military leaders.

Question 1: Were the Nez Perce able to elude and achieve temporary victory over the US cavalry because of their skills in unconventional warfare, logistics, leadership, or weapons and tactics and are these lessons applicable to the current military fight in Afghanistan and Iraq? Secondary questions include: Did the US Cavalry understand the importance of culture and did they possess the necessary skills for effectively dealing with the Nez Perce? The caliber of soldier that fought the Indians was often less than stellar due to an inherent cultural problem within the army of this era. These soldiers had nothing at stake, whereas their enemy faced losing their land and their families. US Cavalry soldiers also suffered from low morale often related to pay problems, lack of civilian education, poor military training, and the hardships associated with soldiering in the Frontier Army. After the Civil War, the US government often failed to adequately fund the Army during the Plains Indian wars. This lack of funding, combined with insufficient manpower, obsolete equipment, and inadequate training impacted commanders' abilities to deliver overwhelming force against hostile Indians. One example was the Whitebird Canyon Battle in which US Regimental Commander, Captain David Perry, appeared in a US court of inquiry to explain his devastating loss to the Nez Perce. He blamed the loss on inadequate training and insufficient ammunition. The court accepted his testimony as factual and cleared him of dereliction during his command.⁷

This paper will address these issues by examination in the following five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the thesis. It investigates the performance of the US Cavalry and the Nez Perce Indians during the numerous battles that eventually forced the Nez Perce's flee to Canada. This chapter postulates the link between the lessons learned from the US Cavalry and Nez Perce conflict and their application to today's counterinsurgency and GWOT operations. This chapter also poses the question: "Why did the US Army fail to achieve decisive victory over the Nez Perce in 1877?" Moreover, this chapter presents the research question, "Were the Nez Perce able to elude and defeat the US cavalry because of their skills in unconventional warfare, logistics, leadership, or weapons?" The chapter concludes with the introduction of the conditions that led the US to war with Nez Perce and the conditions of their 1877 journey from their homelands under pursuit from the US Cavalry.

Chapter 2 focuses on the logistics of the Nez Perce and US Cavalry during their conflict and includes the aspects of food and transportation. The Nez Perce seasonally migrated throughout their territory in order to take advantage of various resources. The US cavalry, on the other hand, used domesticated forms of food for sustainment. This chapter will examine logistics on both sides. It will discuss the availability of transportation methods and will analyze the different movement options for food, supplies, and transportation of personnel stressing specifically the use of horses. During this time, the horse provided key mobility for the Nez Perce and the US cavalry. This chapter will discuss the history of uses of the horse in battle, types of horses and care needed. Finally, this chapter will explore the contemporary techniques the Special Forces Operators used in conjunction with their allies. It will discuss training for the modern day

warrior in the techniques of old that are still currently used in the area of responsibility, specifically the horse.

Chapter 3 examines weapons and tactics. This chapter examines the numerous weapons the Nez Perce used to include the bow and arrow, clubs made from Buffalo bones and lances. Furthermore, it addresses the Nez Perce and US cavalry's ability to acquire the repeating rifle. The chapter also discusses weapons of choice the US cavalry used including rifles, lightweight cannons, and pistols. The last part of the chapter addresses specific tactics and analyzes the techniques and procedures both sides used. Additionally, this chapter reviews a variety of published works on the weapons and tactics used by the Nez Perce used in their flight to Canada. Finally, lessons learned from the aforementioned weapons and tactics chapter are analyzed and compared to procedures currently constituted and instituted in the current counterinsurgency and GWOT. This will include modern day procedures used for man hunting. It will also include successes and integration of interagency and intelligence efforts.

Paramount to understanding the Nez Perce campaign is the analysis in chapter 4, which focuses on leadership, and examines the will of the people. The analysis of the specific leaders from both sides, their previous experience, their leadership ability, and battle command philosophy are all necessary in understanding and applying these lessons from the past to today's conflicts. Evidence suggests that General O. O. Howard and Chief Joseph's peers and leaders consider both to be respected leaders. Even in battle Howard was as much a moral crusader as a warrior, insisting that his troops attend prayer and temperance meetings. Leaders from both sides had unique points of view, strengths, and weaknesses. This chapter will also discuss battle command (the exercise of command

in operations against a hostile, thinking enemy) and its criteria for success. What was successful and if not, why not? Chief Joseph, leader of the Nez Perce, surrendered to General Oliver Howard, bringing to an end his four-month-long circuitous retreat. Why is this a remarkable feat? The facts show that Joseph and a band of fewer than 200 warriors, accompanied by nearly 600 women and children, traveled over 1,500 miles of mountainous terrain all the while eluding or defeating their enemy before a force of 500 led by Colonel Miles finally stopped them. Reduced by this time to just eighty-seven men, Joseph held out for five days in a snowstorm, and arguably surrendered because his people had no food or blankets and would soon die of cold and starvation. Did leadership play a part in missed opportunities or in gaining the advantage? The will of the people during the thirteen battles and engagements throughout the Nez Perce War certainly play a key factor. Walter Fleming, a leading expert on Native American Indians, offers information for analysis. Other sources such as memoirs, interviews, and specially selected articles will be reviewed and integrated, including the extensive work of James Merrell, one of the finest scholars and professors of history at Ohio State University. Another great source analyzed in this study is by George T. Denison in 1877. Denison gives great insight to the cavalry and lessons learned. These aforementioned sources bring to light the many different views through a plethora of available mediums. Finally, this chapter will focus on the economic and social conditions that existed during this time and the political ramifications of the movement of Native American Indians to reservations.

Chapters 4 and 5 will examine lessons learned from the Nez Perce and how they apply to today's combat scenarios. By examining the logistics, weapons, tactics,

leadership, interlacing the culture, will of the people, man-hunting procedures of the Native American Indian, and by focusing on the Nez Perce as one of the last holdouts who stood in the way of US western expansion, one can develop a greater understanding about why the Army often failed to accomplish its mission to defeat hostile Indians. Even the unsympathetic General William T. Sherman considered the Nez Perce trek one of the most brilliant military retreats in American history. This chapter will focus on the modern lessons learned and instituted on the GWOT and counterinsurgency.

Examining past battles, engagements, and campaigns such as the Nez Perce can aid in future wars and in current US fight. Many of the same tactics the US cavalry faced continue to plague the US in its unconventional fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. These include raid, feints, ambushes, and the use of natural resources. In the ongoing GWOT and in extended operations in Iraq, the US must use every available source of study and historical lessons in search of ways to better its chances for success. The Nez Perce conflict provides many suggestions regarding today's fight that will help modern leaders in mission accomplishment.

The surrender speech of Chief Joseph has become perhaps the most famous statement in American Indian history:

I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. . . . The old men are all killed. . . . It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.⁸

This speech came at the conclusion of a remarkable effort by the Nez Perce to escape to Canada in 1877. They had traveled a circuitous route of about 1,500 miles and had nearly

reached their destination before surrendering just south of the Canadian border. They were a formidable foe and their pursuit stretched the US Cavalry to its limits. Today's military can learn from these episodes and apply lessons learned to its counterinsurgent and GWOT battles today.

As previously stated, chapter 2, will examine the logistics of the Nez Perce and US Cavalry during their conflict and includes the aspects of food and transportation. It will compare and contrast the two, very different approaches that each side had towards logistics and provide potential lessons learned from the positive and negative viewpoints. Within the construct of logistics lies, the availability of transportation methods, and in chapter 2 the analysis will detail the different movement options for food, supplies, and transportation of personnel stressing specifically the use of horses. Relating this to modern warfare, this chapter will also explore the contemporary techniques the Special Forces operators used in conjunction with their allies, and it will discuss training for the modern day warrior in old techniques still currently used in the area of responsibility.

¹Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, Interbranch Relations, Hearing on Legislative-Executive Relations, 22 June 1993; available from <http://www.rules.house.gov/Archives/jcoc2av.htm>; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

²Department of the Army, Field Manual-Interim 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2005), 12.

³Peter J. Canonico, “An Alternate Military Strategy for the War on Terrorism” (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2004), 75.

⁴Patrick D. Marques, “Guerrilla Warfare Tactics in Urban Environments” (Thesis, Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2003), 65.

⁵Bruce Quarrie, *The World's Elite Forces* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1985), 19.

⁶Horace Axtel, Nez Perce Tribal Elder, Beaver Dam Saddle Summer of 2003; available from <http://www.idaho.sierraclub.org/docs/Lolo.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

⁷William T Sherman, *Report of the General of the Army, Headquarters of the Army, Annual Report of the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Department for the Fiscal Year Ending June* (Washington, DC: GPO, 7 November 1877), 1-15.

⁸L. V. McWhorter, *Hear Me My Chiefs: Nez Perce History and Legend* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1952), 65.

CHAPTER 2

LOGISTICS

Battlefields of today are fast-paced and non-linear. They challenge every aspect of commanders and their prosecution of the mission at hand. To support operations in this environment, commanders need unique logistical systems, systems that are flexible, adaptable, and relevant. Contemporary mission sets are dynamic and unpredictable, and to combat this, commanders and their logisticians must constantly modify and adjust to be successful. Logistics has been a combat multiplier for centuries. From Napoleon, renowned for his logistical skills and considered the father of logistics, to modern, well-known successful generals, effective use of logistics proved invaluable in their combat victories. As recent as April 2006, 18th Airborne Corps Commander, Lieutenant General John Vines, in a lecture to Command and General Staff student body stated, “A lack of knowledge on logistics will kill soldiers.”¹ Is there any doubt of the importance of logistics on the battlefield? Certainly not, and the same aspects discussed here held true during the US Cavalry and Nez Perce campaign.

During the Nez Perce campaign, logistics, mainly food and transportation played an important part in the success of the Nez Perce and the failure of the US Cavalry. The Nez Perce seasonally migrated on foot and horseback throughout their territory in order to take advantage of various resources. On the other hand, the US cavalry used domesticated forms of food for sustenance and well trained, but high maintenance, horses and mules for transportation.

In the late 1800s, mobility equaled success. The Nez Perce were excellent horsemen and skilled in the art of warfare. In their pursuit, the US cavalry lacked specific

knowledge of the Nez Perce strengths and did not examine their “roots” and lacked an understanding of the cultural aspects of their enemy. The Nez Perce adhered to the land and maintained a great respect for it. They possessed their own unique decision-making system, basing and evolving a majority of their decisions around the family and the needs of the village. They knew the mountains, prairies, and canyons for miles in every direction. Moving freely with the seasons, they enjoyed a rich and abundant life. One of the main and key multipliers to their logistical shrewdness was their long-time relationship with horses.



Figure 2. Nez Perce Warrior on Appaloosa Horse

Source: Frank Gilbert, *The Indian and the Horse* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 31.

This association dates back centuries to 1541 when Viceroy Mendoza of Spain put allied Aztec chieftains on horses to better lead their tribesmen in the Mixton War of Central Mexico. This appears to have been the first time that horses were officially given to the Indians, but from their early entry to the Indian culture, horses were integral. A well-known scene was that of Indians seen rubbing themselves with horse sweat, so that they might acquire the magic of the “big dog.”² As horses were so important, it seems appropriate to continue discussing their historical relationship with Native Americans.

The early relationship between Native Americans and horses was not always mutually beneficial. Indians, especially the Apaches, acquired a taste for roasted horsemeat. After 1680, the Pueblo Indians forced the Spanish out of New Mexico. As a result, the Spanish left behind many horses. The Pueblo learned to ride well but did not live by the horse. They mainly valued the horse as food and as an item to trade with the Plains Indians for jerked buffalo meat and robes. In the 1700s, the horse developed its logistical notoriety and greatly enhanced mobility for its users. The Nez Perce evolved into one of the leading tribes with respect to its relationship with the horse, and became greatly renowned for their large herds and selective breeding practices. Horses and horsemanship gradually spread from tribe to tribe until the Plains Indians became the great mounted buffalo hunters of the American West.³ The alliance of the American Indians and the Spanish horse gave the Indians great mobility and changed their way of life. Tribes with horses were dominant over other tribes who relied on moving camp by foot.

In many tribes, horses were a measure of wealth. Therefore, horses were often the cause, as well as the means, of waging war between tribes. The Indians’ own pictographs

often featured their most prized possession and companion--the horse. Few tribes could rival the Nez Perce Indians in the art of selective breeding. The Nez Perce inhabited the mountainous plateau region at the intersection of what are now the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Here, near the Palouse River, the steep mountains and box canyons provided natural enclosures in which the Nez Perce could contain or separate horses for selective breeding. The trademark of the Nez Perce horses was their spots. These horses, named Appaloosas after the river near which they were bred, were renowned among western Indians for their speed and endurance.⁴

For the Nez Perce, horses provided a great logistical advantage. Their care required minimal effort, and the Nez Perce horses simply ate grass and other plants from the plains. They drank water from seeps, springs, streams, or lakes and were very self-sufficient. Adult horses eat about twenty pounds of plant food each day. The Nez Perce horses were free pastured, as a result, the horses resided in their natural state, requiring little maintenance. For example, the wear and tear of their hooves was equivalent to their growth, which kept the Nez Perce from having to shod their horses.

In comparison, the US Cavalry horses required more care and daily maintenance. They were not free pastured resulting in a more aggressive, regimented feeding plan, and requiring constant horseshoeing and other costly and time-consuming care.⁵ The US Cavalry did not use horses as frequently as the Nez Perce, this led to significant time in stalls. Long hours in a stall required an anti-natural tension in their legs and feet, causing an unusual wear of the hooves. In active campaigns, the US Cavalry horse was saddled an average of about fifteen hours out of the twenty-four hours a day. Their feed was nominally ten pounds of grain per day, but in reality, they averaged about eight pounds of

grain. They had no hay and the only other feed was available from the land during tactical halts. The usual water provided to US Cavalry horses was brook water that was so muddy by the passage of the column that it appeared as the color of chocolate. Many of the US Cavalry soldiers knew that they were not treating their horses, as they should, as true force multipliers and part of the actual US Cavalry. Private Charles Adams of the 17th PA Volunteer Cavalry Company E stated: “Of course, sore backs are our greatest trouble. Backs soon get feverish under the saddle and the first day’s march swells them; after that day-by-day the trouble grows. No care can stop it. Every night after a march, no matter how late it may be, or tired, or hungry I am if permission is given to unsaddle, I examine all the horses’ backs myself and see that everything is done for them that can be done.”⁶ It is clear to see the difference in the relationships of the US Cavalry and horses versus that of the Nez Perce. The Nez Perce horses were part of their culture in every aspect, whereas the US Cavalry viewed horses as an un-integrated tool.

As a key logistical pillar, the horse’s role in the Plains Indians battles was noteworthy. These battles started when the peaceful life of the Nez Perce ended due to settlers and miners intruding on their lands. To resolve these land disputes, treaties were made but were soon broken. The conflicts continued until Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce were defeated as they fought on the run with 3,000 horses on a 1,600-mile evacuation to Canada in 1877. All along the way, the Indians fought off pursuing US Cavalry forces. In one battle alone, the Indians lost 900 of their spotted horses. Just below the Canadian border, Chief Joseph surrendered to the cavalry as he heroically declared, “I will fight no more forever.”⁷ His remaining tribe, decimated, wounded, and starving, was exiled to Oklahoma, and Chief Joseph was imprisoned at Fort Leavenworth, but the US

cavalry dispersed the remaining 1,100 horses. The purity and survival of the Appaloosa was threatened until the breed was revived in the 1900s.

The US Army underwent somewhat of an institutional evaluation of its Cavalry's four-month-long pursuit of the Nez Perce and associated sub par performance. An investigation of current field techniques afforded an important insight into the workings of field commands during the Nez Perce and, presumably, other period Indian campaigns. Many leaders believed that the cavalry's performance, as manifested particularly at White Bird Canyon, but also at Looking Glass's camp, Clearwater, Weippe, and Camas Meadows, was below standard. At the request of high-ranking officials, the investigation decided to solicit information from the many Cavalry officers regarding field operations. Among the recommendations for improvement were:

Our Cavalry soldiers have been obliged to work as laborers, and have not . . . been drilled enough. . . . It should be remembered that the Cavalry soldier has a double part to perform, namely: to care for and manage his horse, and besides to acquire even more skill with his arms than the Infantry man.⁸

1. Establishment of a cavalry school to provide more drill for both horses and soldiers;
2. Increased drill with arms, including firing with blanks to keep the animals from bolting, and target practice from horseback;
3. Arming the troops with Springfield rifles or with carbines with lengthened barrels;
4. Improved training in skirmishing from horseback;
5. Development of improved proficiency with the saber ("in drill, if not in campaign") to increase soldiers' confidence and agility;
6. Relinquishment of the revolver for combat in favor of the long arm;
7. Increased practice in swimming cavalry horses across rivers ("at Salmon river, [some] . . . had to be towed over by boats two and four at a time"); and

8. Implementation of a system of reward and recognition for the cavalry soldier (who has “more to do in the way of preparation and subsequent work than the Infantry soldier”), including increased compensation.⁹

Beyond improved training in marksmanship, the US Cavalry implemented very few of these recommendations. The US Army opted to continue its overall sluggish and reactive performance throughout the remaining years of the Indian wars.¹⁰

In addition to the horse as a key logistical piece of the Nez Perce, US Cavalry conflict (with the Nez Perce truly gaining an advantage), food and sustenance became a significant logistical player and critical vulnerability. The Nez Perce were masters of living off the land and acquiring food in a variety of efficient and effective means. As a tribe, they seasonally migrated throughout their territory in order to take advantage of various resources. They took advantage of, and were professionals at, acquiring salmon and other fish, mountain goats and sheep, bear, moose, elk, deer, small game, and birds. They fed from aboriginal food plants that included camas bulbs, bitterroot, bark, pine nuts, moss, sunflower seeds, wild carrots, wild onions, and several varieties of berries. Expeditions acquired resources to what are now southern Idaho, eastern Oregon, and Washington, down the Columbia River, and even into the northern Great Plains for buffalo.¹¹

The US cavalry, on the other hand, was much less self-sufficient and required a large logistical footprint to draw from for food. They frequently herded beef cattle and took these herds with them. Not all soldiers were thrilled with this constant diet. “Today some beef cattle arrived to serve as food for us all, poor things.”¹² When the US Cavalry would set up a base camp from which they based to do patrols, they would base their food sources from these as well. During these times, they added to their beef diet with

interesting supplements such as hardtack. Hardtack was a type of biscuit perforated with holes. It had a long shelf life and many soldiers used it as a replacement for bread. This was a less than effective food source, because it molded easily and it was extremely hard. In order to eat it, “you had to bust it up with your rifle butt or a handy rock; put it in your mouth and leave it there until it became softer.”¹³ The US Cavalry also ate beans and rice, dried meat and salted bacon, dried fruit, crackers, and hard dried bread, but all soldiers had to carry this. Compared to the Nez Perce, this was cumbersome and ineffective. Ironically, the US Cavalry and its many wagon trains even traded with Indians for salmon and vegetables. They saw the advantages of living from the land both from a quality of food perspective and from an ease of logistics standpoint.

From a logistical perspective, the Nez Perce were very adaptable, flexible, and practiced the most efficient and effective methods when it came to transportation and food. Because of this, the Nez Perce were more mobile and had fewer issues with the care of their horses (feed, shoeing, and others). Additionally, by eating off the land they were more flexible, adaptable, and self-sufficient. Their footprint was smaller; all of these aspects helped them develop into a lean, successful fighting organization.

As it relates to the modern US Military, there are many lessons to be learned from the Nez Perce campaign. The Nez Perce were adaptable and flexible in their logistics, and the US Military should apply these principles during its current involvement in the GWOT. This especially applies to transportation and food. The logistical systems currently in Afghanistan and Iraq are superb. With the use of contractors for logistical support, this allows the US military to focus on warfighting. In a unique historical parallel, US Special Forces soldiers are adapting the Nez Perce specialty of the cultural

use of horses. There are many famous pictures of these warriors on horseback in the Afghani Mountains, but even today, there are Special Forces operators at the Command and General Staff College learning how to ride and pack military equipment and weapons on horses.

This positive progress has not always been the case. Early in Operation Enduring Freedom, the American military, equipped with the most technically advanced weapon systems, lacked the skill with horses, which caused them ridicule from their Afghan counterparts. Unique, adaptable, and flexible logistics, in this case knowledge of horses and mules, would have given them instant credibility with the locals. This shortfall was both a logistical and lack of cultural understanding of the Afghanis. Eventually, the two cultures working together, the high-technology Western civilization working symbiotically with ancient Eastern culture; synergized toward a common goal. In future campaigns, the US military should prepare logically for any scenario and in many cases, change their culture and to adapt new (or old) technologies, or even intermingle old technologies with the new.

All the while the US military must have an adaptive mindset to the culture and flexible philosophy toward war fighting. The insurgents and terrorists in today's GWOT are often similar to the Nez Perce of old. They take advantage of the local lay of the land. They use local transportation, in this case indigenous vehicles, versus the horses of old, but the parallels are evident. Today's terrorist feed off of the local population similar to how the Nez Perce fed from the land. The similarities could go on and on, but the key point to focus on is how the US military must NOT be like the US Cavalry of old in pursuit of the Nez Perce. The current US military must not bog themselves down with

burdensome logistics. They must find ways to also “feed off of the land.” If this is not feasible, they must look for ways to at least break the enemies’ logistical ties and effectiveness. This is not an easy task, but from history’s lessons, one knows that as long as the Nez Perce could move with horses and self-sustain themselves, they were successful. Today’s US military must make combating these principles a top priority in its fight against today’s enemy.

In addition to these logistical lessons learned, there are other areas such as the key mix of weapons and tactics. The next chapter will examine this in depth and include a look at the numerous weapons and advances in firepower of the Nez Perce and US Cavalry. It will also address specific tactics and analyzes the tactics, techniques and procedures both sides used and propose lessons learned and how they might apply to the current counterinsurgency and GWOT.

¹Lieutenant General John Vines, 18th Airborne Corps Commander, Lecture to US Army Command and General Staff College students, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, April 2006.

²Patricia Mabee Fazio, “The Fight to Save a Memory: Creation of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range 1968 and Evolving Federal Wild Horse Protection through 1971” (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1995), 21.

³Michael Sample, *Bison Symbol of the American West* (Helena, MT: Sample Falcon Press, 1987), 54.

⁴Appaloosa Horse Club, *History*; available from <http://www.appaloosa.com/association/history.shtml>; Internet; accessed on 16 May 2006.

⁵Chief of Cavalry, US Army, *The Cavalry Horseshoer's Technical Manual* (War Department, Technical Manual, Tm 2-220), Reprint (Brookfield, WI: Lessiter Publications, 1999), 61.

⁶Private Charles Adams, 17th PA Volunteer Cavalry Company E, Letter to his mother, 1877.

⁷Jerome A Greene, Nez Perce Summer, 1877, *The US Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis*, Foreword by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., (Montana Historical Society Press, 2000).

⁸Brigadier General Philip St. George Cooke, USA, *Cooke's Cavalry Tactics* (1862), Cavalry Tactics: or Regulations for the Instruction, Formations, and Movements of the Cavalry of the Army and Volunteers of the United States (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1862), 5-7.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Greene, 28.

¹¹Deward E. Walker, Jr., Nez Perce fieldnotes, Manuscripts in D. Walker's possession, "American Indians of Idaho, Volume 1: Aboriginal Cultures," (Anthropological Monographs, University of Idaho, Department of Sociology/ Anthropology. Moscow, Idaho, 1964), 77.

¹²Emily McCorkie Fitzgerald, *An Army Doctor's Wife on the Frontier: The Letters of Emily McCorkie Fitzgerald from Alaska and the Far West 1874-1878*, ed. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 11.

¹³United Stated Department of Interior, Gettysburg National Military Park, Homepage; available from <http://www.nps.gov/gett/home.htm>; Internet; accessed on 9 June 2006.

CHAPTER 3

WEAPONS

I do not believe that Indians . . . people who for the most part speak no English, live in squalor and degradation, make little progress from year to year, who are a perpetual source of expense to the government and a constant menace to thousands of their white neighbors, a hindrance to civilization and a clog on our progress have any right to forcibly keep their children out of school to grow up like themselves, a race of barbarians and semi-savages.

Thomas Jefferson Morgan,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Appointed in 1889,
Oklahoma State Library¹

Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief.

They are all brothers. . . .

Chief Joseph, Speaking in Washington DC
on 14January 1879

Throughout war's the history of weapons and tactics have been integral to victory. Today, in pondering the weapons of modern war, the M4, 9-millimeter handgun or the M240D machine gun come to mind. Along with these common weapons, technological advances have flooded the battlefield with an amazing array of weapons such as unmanned aerial systems, over the horizon communications and unmatched air power. Technological advances bring certain advantages to countries such as the US and its allies. In contrast, its current enemies (for example insurgents and terrorists) use simple, less complicated, but equally effective tools in their fight. IEDs, rocket propelled grenades, and simple cell phones for networking and recruiting efforts build the backbone for today's terrorist cache. They have proven that their weapons are just as lethal and

effective as the United States'. It is important to note and emphasize that the use of non-lethal weapons and their ability to influence others can produce desired and secondary and third order effects. Consider that Osama Bin Laden stated that 90 percent of Al Qaeda efforts are spent on the media operations and influencing the masses.² With this as the enemy's primary will and intentions, the US must counter such enemy capabilities. Whether with weapon systems or through the use of information operations, the way to address these second and third order effects lies in innovative and "out of the box" concepts that leverage the US's superpower strengths to combat the terrorists' strengths. Sometimes the answer lies in weaponry, and other times, in well thought out tactics. In developing these weapons and tactics, perhaps history, in this case the Nez Perce and US Cavalry conflict, can offer lessons learned and help to influence modern success on the battlefield.

The Nez Perce were adaptive, innovative, and skilled warriors. To prepare for conflict, they formed war parties. They incorporated the use of surprise as their main weapon and used the principle of force concentration. In the face of superior force, retreat was not dishonorable. Nez Perce warriors also made every attempt to remove their wounded from the field of battle and to recover their dead. Many of the weapons the Nez Perce used included the simple bow and arrow and clubs made from Buffalo bones and lances. "Lances were typically 44 inches in length, and were primarily designed for hunting bison. In the hands of the Dog Soldiers, lances were used to pierce the body straight through. On horseback, the lance could go through several people standing in a row."³ Additionally, the Nez Perce attempted to incorporate newer technology and were able to obtain the Spencer carbine, one of the most popular firearms of the Civil War, by

trading blankets, buffalo skins, and horses. With their time-tested bows, arrows, and clubs, combined with their new rifles, the Nez Perce proved a formidable foe. An example of this was explained by Sergeant McCarthy as he describes a battle technique the Nez Perce used: "When a warrior wanted to fire," he explained, "he rolled off the pony to the ground, took deliberate aim, and crawled on again--the pony remaining quiet and patient during the firing, lying by the roadside." Man and beast were compatible and together they made a splendid fighting unit.⁴ Another observation of the Nez Perce:

The relative calm of the preceding day was shattered when Looking Glass and more than one hundred warriors arrived, all reportedly armed with repeating rifles. "We were lost to know what this day would bring forth," wrote Buck. He described their appearance as "formidable," while at the same time "the finest looking tribe of Indians I have ever seen." A man passing through the community found it full of Nez Perce, warriors, buying whatever they could get, provisions, clothing, etc., and ammunition, of which I believe they got in small quantities.⁵

The US Army of the time often became complacent with their technological advances especially with respect to conflicts with Native Americans. This mindset changed, however, with the massacre of a detachment of eighty men under the command of Captain William J. Fetterman on the morning of 21 December 1866. This Indian victory convinced the Army that the frontier needed better arms. In 1867, Allin conversion .50 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifles were introduced to the US Cavalry and sent to Fort Phil Kearny. Point of fact is that that Fort Phil Kearney consisted mainly of infantry companies but only one was cavalry. It did not take long for these rifles to prove their worth. Soon thereafter, a company of 40 men in the vicinity of Fort Kearny, under the command of Captain James Powell, was attacked by a massive Sioux war party, exceeding 1,500 braves. Powell, with an enormous amount of calm confidences, ordered, "Men, find a place in the wagon boxes, you'll have to fight for your

lives today.” These defiant, outnumbered defenders fired at will, stopping waves of war-painted Indians from overwhelming their small makeshift fortress of overturned wagons. The Indians finally withdrew. Sergeant Sam Gibson, elated after the “Wagonbox Fight,” remarked: “Thanks to GOD and LT. GEN Sherman, we were armed with the new weapon.”⁶ Another staple in the US Cavalry’s arsenal is the aforementioned Spencer carbine.



Figure 3. US Cavalry Soldier with Spencer Carbine Rifle
Source: Norm Flayderman, *Flayderman’s Guide: To Antique American Firearm*, 8th ed. (Iowa, WI: Krause Publications, 1998), 26.

Although not issued until the latter part of 1863, it was one of the most popular firearms of the Civil War. Its distinguishing feature was its magazine that could hold

seven metallic rim fire cartridges, fed to the breech by a compressed spring in the magazine. The magazine was loaded through the butt of the rifle. When the trigger guard was lowered, the breechblock dropped down, and the spent cartridge case was ejected.⁷ This weapon embodied a huge advantage; however, for some reason, the US military was reluctant to use repeating firearms. General Ripley said he found “the weight of the arms with the loaded magazine objectionable and the requirement of special ammunition.”⁸ He was also concerned about the transportability of the ammunition’s on horseback and the guns’ ability to withstand battle conditions. He did not feel it was much better than current breech-loading rifles. It can be argued that the Spencer repeating rifle was a revolutionary military weapon and one of the greatest force multipliers in history. Prior to its appearance on the battlefield, a soldier with a muzzle-loading weapon could only fire about two or three times a minute. Even a breech-loading single-shot rifle could only fire about once every few seconds. With the lever-action Spencer, a soldier could fire about once a second or better. In one of the first battles to see the weapon used, at Hoovers Gap on 24 June 1863, the Confederate officers thought that fresh troops were reinforcing Union soldiers. Such was the volume of their fire.⁹ In June of 1863, however, General Ripley ordered about 250 Henry rifles.¹⁰ Although it was a better mechanical design than its rival, the Spencer Rifle, the Union Army during the Civil War, did not choose the Henry Repeater because it was not as rugged. However, the Henry was very popular with those familiar with it, and many soldiers bought one out of their own pocket.¹¹

A famous incident involving the Henry involved a single man, James Wilson, who killed seven men that attacked his house using only eight shots. His ability to fire in

rapid succession without having to remove the weapon from his shoulder overwhelmed the numerically superior enemy.¹²

In addition to rifles, artillery also played an important part in the military campaigns against Native Americans. Perhaps the best-known artillery gun on the frontier was the 12-pounder mountain howitzer Model of 1835. This small gun was designed to be packed on or drawn by horses and mules. It was well liked by the troops due to this portability. The little gun saw wide use through the late 1870s when it was replaced by the Hotchkiss 1.65" mountain gun. The Hotchkiss gun, both lighter and having three times the range of the old 12-pounder, was introduced in the Nez Perce War of 1877. It quickly became popular with the men, seeing use in actions against the Sioux as well. "Artillery played an important part in the military campaigns of the west. Its weapons could break a most determined charge, could drive an enemy out from cover, and demoralize the foe. At times, it was the only weapon capable of preventing the Indians from over running a post or wagon train. Artillery proved an important asset to the western military effort."¹³

While the breech-loading Hotchkiss was a new addition to the US Cavalry, Nelson Miles (American soldier who served in the American Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, and later served as the Commanding General of the United States Army and recipient of the Medal of Honor) had used the Napoleon gun against the Sioux and Northern Cheyennes at Wolf Mountains, Montana. During one particular engagement, this weapon proved most critical and forced the surrender of many of the tribesmen. The gun with its wooden carriage and limber weighed 3,200 pounds and was drawn by six mules. It delivered explosive shells with pronounced effect against targets

as far off as 1,700 hundred yards, and its principal benefit lay in its capability to vary its trajectory from flat to arching like a howitzer. Although prized during the Civil War as an effective anti-personnel weapon, the Napoleon's great weight and lack of maneuverability made it a cumbersome field component on the plains frontier. Because of space limitations posed by the wagon transportation, only twenty-four of its shells could be with the train and available for use.¹⁴ Yet when the gun opened up its fire, as in the case at Bear Paw, it produced a deadly physical and psychological impact among the Nez Perce.



Figure 4. US Cavalry Field Artillery Cannon
Source: The Hotchkiss Ordnance Company, LTD, Descriptive Catalogue of War Material, (Factory Catalog, circa 1895), 6.

Lieutenant Henry Romeyn said of the 12-pounder, “its boom told the Indians that a new element had entered for their destruction.” Describing the effect of the fires, Romeyn continued, “It was almost impossible, owing to the shape of the ground, to bring it to bear on the pits now occupied by the hostiles, who took refuge in the banks of the crooked “coulees”(a dry or intermittent stream valley or a long, trench-like gorge) where no direct fire could be made to reach and where the shells, if burst over them, were likewise liable to injure our men on the high ground behind. A dropping or mortar fire was, however, obtained by sinking the trail of the gun in a pit dug for it and using a high elevation with a small charge of powder.” This allowed for effective fire. The cannon fire, however, must have occurred sparingly because of the small number of rounds on hand.

The artillery fire had an immediate impact among the Nez Perce. One horse packer remembered, “When that big gun went off you never heard such howling from squaws, dogs, and kids.” Other than this, there was little response. The enemy Indian warriors fired only a few shots in return. “They are either short of ammunition or else we are too well entrenched for them to waste ammunition upon us,” wrote Captain Snyder. Although the use of artillery did not cause complete capitulation, it did prove effective. Now the US Cavalry leaders had to add to the effectiveness of their weapons with insightful leadership and tactics. These leaders believed that the Nez Perce would not surrender and felt that they would “have to starve them out. To charge them would be madness.” Zimmer recorded that despite “a good shelling” of their camp, the Nez Perce “are well fixed and intend to wear us out.” That night Miles sent a courier to Fort Benton with dispatches.¹⁵ With the US Cavalry’s superior weapons, one would expect them to

have conquered the Nez Perce with relative ease. History proves this was not the case. Using innovative and elusive tactics, the Nez Perce thwarted the US Cavalry's ultimate victory for many months and even won certain engagements throughout the campaign. Their tactical skill garnered the utmost respect from the whites due to mastery of Native American warfare and common military principles such as, "Know your enemy; Fight them relentlessly; don't be scared - be prepared."¹⁶ They capitalized on time tested Native American warfare techniques, the origins of which were developed in Northeastern forests, and included adaptations of their culture. Native American tactics were highly sophisticated and well suited to the environment of these Northeastern forests. In contrast, the US Cavalry fought mostly in a reactionary mode with no solid tactics, techniques, and procedures to counter the Indians. They were forced to develop and adapt their limited tactics as they progressed. Conversely, throughout the Nez Perce campaign and even in the face of a technologically superior opponent, Native American tactical practices remained largely unchanged while the US military was forced to change and evolve. The native tactics were based heavily on their experience hunting game. Regiments and marching orders were absent--in fact, they were completely useless in the dense vegetation of the forests. Warriors moved carefully in spread out groupings, and kept their movements stealthy.

The favored tactic of native war chiefs was the raid. Native warfare revolved around intertribal feuds, and warring tribes would put together small groups to perform lightning strikes against their enemies, hence the raid. Warriors would move quietly through the forest and strike without warning. Unlike the US Cavalry, the Native Americans fully incorporated the natural environment into their strategies. They used the

cover of darkness, the confusion of storms, and the shelter of the trees to enhance the effectiveness of their attacks. Another common native tactic was the ambush. As many tribes moved their seasonal settlements or sent hunting parties out, enemy tribes would set up traps to strike at their opponents. During their ambushes, the natives used variations in the terrain to their advantage. For instance, an ambush might be set up to trap an enemy war party between the raiding warriors and a fast-moving stream, or a cliff, or a steep hill. US Cavalrymen remarked on this tactic's effectiveness and were impressed with the low-casualty rate of Native Americans in this form of combat. Once a lightning raid was executed, the attackers would retreat, and when an ambush took place, the attackers often left with prisoners rather than wiping out the enemy entirely. The natives never marched in regiments, but rather preferred to focus their tactics on individuals.¹⁷ Their tactics were solid and made them a formidable foe even in the face of superior opponents. Their war fighting skills were truly impressive, and today's military can truly learn from them.

The modern US Army trains and encourages individual initiative among its soldiers; training in the use of natural terrain and the advantages of camouflage. Soldiers are trained in accuracy of firearms rather than training in volley fire or parade-ground maneuvers as regular battle tactics. Soldiers learn to work as a team, protect each other, and accomplish their objectives with a minimum of casualties. Modern US Special Forces, idolized as able to enter hostile areas undetected, strike with efficiency and accuracy, and withdraw before the enemy can respond, are a definite modern parallel to elite Native American warriors. Special Forces of today mimic early Native American warriors with prized accuracy and stealth in combat. Like the Native Americans, Special

Forces are organized with sophisticated tactics, which are well adapted to the natural environment than those of their enemy. Special Operators throughout the current GWOT and counterinsurgency fights consistently apply lessons learned from the Nez Perce and American Indians, and in doing so, find success. Their use of natural terrain, camouflage, and the cover of darkness are only a few of these tactics.¹⁸ While modern Special Forces mimic the positive aspects of Native Americans, they also encounter significant tactical challenges similar to those the US Cavalry encountered. One such weakness is in the area of man hunting and highlights a weakness in the US Cavalry tactics and one that continues as a struggle today.

As discussed previously in this paper, the US cavalry had a difficult time trying to apprehend the Nez Perce, especially their key leaders. Key leaders, such as Chief Joseph, were a center of gravity for the Nez Perce and, if caught, could have ended the conflict much earlier. At the time, however, there was no doctrine for any type of man hunting. This same dilemma exists today. Modern Special Forces know from past examples, such as the Nez Perce, that the decapitation of key leaders from insurgent and terrorist operations will lead to quicker success.

In this arena, there is limited academic research on how to pursue and manhunt key persons, or to quote a modern term, persons of national interest (PONIs). Using “find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyze” as the common steps to the apprehension of such PONIs, the US military, more specifically Special Forces, are especially improving with the “find” aspect and have set in place plans to improve overall man hunting.¹⁹ Contrary to US Cavalry leaders of old, modern leaders see the need for this improvement and have developed a new Special Forces operation that is intended to remove the people

comprising the broad middle of the Ba'athist underground in Iraq. They realize that the only way to win is to go unconventional. One key US official commented, "we're going to have to play their game . . . guerrilla versus guerrilla . . . terrorism versus terrorism. We've got to scare the Iraqis into submission."²⁰ Adding actions to words, a new Special Forces group, designated as a special task force, has been assembled from elite organizations. Its highest priority is the neutralization of the Ba'athist insurgents by capture or other means. This revitalized Special Forces mission is a victory for the military leadership, and displays a significant step by the Pentagon to seek active and secret help in the war against the Iraqi insurgency. From history's lessons, what is success is vital to suppressing the insurgency and accelerating modern war timelines.

Weapons and tactics will always play a vital role in the success or failure in war. While today's US military technology is progressing at lightning speed, there are still many lessons to be learned from simple wars, even wars on their own continent. Past lessons show that often adaptive and effective tactics can often defeat technologically superior weapons. If the US cavalry possessed this knowledge, they would have countered Nez Perce tactics much earlier and focused on not only their specific skills, but also their key leaders. Today's leaders do have the right to use lessons of the past, so to ignore them is irrational. The lessons from both the Nez Perce and US cavalry sides, with respect to weapons and tactics, both positive and negative, must be leveraged for modern success on the battlefield. Today's GWOT and counterinsurgency fights are too important to neglect history's lessons. Failure is not an option, and military leaders must heed their heritage to posture themselves for success and crush the enemy. The next

chapter will discuss the significance of leadership in this historical case, and more importantly how it must be applied today.

¹Electronic Publishing Center, Homepage; available from <http://digital.library.okstate.edu>; Internet; accessed on 3 September 2006.

²Jennifer Harper, “Church a Way of Life in Dixie,” *The Washington Times*, 28 April 2006.

³McWhorter, 360.

⁴Will J. Trimble, “A Soldier of the Oregon Frontier,” *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 8 (1907): 32; and McCarthy, “Army Sketches,” 11-12 June 1877; available from <http://www.nps.gov/nepe/shs/chap12e.htm>; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

⁵Alfred Cave, *Idaho Weekly Statesman*, 6 September 1877.

⁶Bud Hannings, *A Portrait of the Stars and Stripes* (Glenside, PA: Seniram Publishing, 1989), 13.

⁷Division of the History of Technology, *Armed Forces History Magazine* (April 1988): 35.

⁸Arthur L. Wagner, *Organization and Tactics*, 2d ed. (Kansas City, MO: Hudson Publishing Company, 1906), 87.

⁹Tony Beck, *Spencer's Repeaters in the Civil War: Part 2-In the Field*; available from <http://www.civilwarguns.com/spencer2.html>; Internet; accessed on 22 November 2005.

¹⁰Wagner, 41.

¹¹L. Romano Rifle Co; available from http://www.romanorifle.com/SPENCER_Firearms/spencer_firearms.html; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2006.

¹²Joe Bilby, “The Henry Rifle--Then, July 1991”; available from http://civilwartalk.com/cwt_alt/resources/articles/joe_bilby/july_1991.htm; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

¹³Douglas J. Howser, “Cuban Republic Insurgents Armed Themselves With Hotchkiss Guns” *The Artilleryman* 15, no. 2, (Spring 1994): 14-17.

¹⁴Charles Woodruff, Battle of . . . Charles Woodruff, in Stewart, *Letters from the Big Hole*, 8 August 1877: 55-56.

¹⁵*New York Herald*, 8 October 1877; and *Army and Navy Journal*, 13 October 1877.

¹⁶Global Learning Objects, *War and Peace: Know Your Enemy: Report Underscores Lack Of Understanding Of Insurgents*; available from <http://crisisgroup.org>. Internet; accessed on 12 January 2006.

¹⁷Nebraska State Historical Society, Research and Publication Division; available from http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/markers/texts/1864_indian_raids.html; Internet; accessed on 18 January 2006.

¹⁸Major Glenn Bollinger, Special Forces Officer, Interview by author on 3 December, 2005, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

¹⁹Major Steve Marks, Special Forces Officer and Man hunting expert, Interview by author on 14 February 2006, Fort Leavenworth, KS; and Major Mat Nilson, Special Forces Officer and Man hunting expert, Interview by author on 14 February 2006, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

²⁰Major John Blake, Special Forces Officer, Interview by author on 7 November, 2005, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP

I never could detect the shadow of a reason why the color of the skin should impair the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Oliver Otis Howard, circa 1865, Howard and the Freedmen¹

Leaders know what they value. They also recognize the importance of ethical behavior. The best leaders exhibit both their values and their ethics in their leadership style and actions. Leadership ethics and values should be visible because one lives them in ones actions every single day. While leadership is easy to explain, leadership is not so easy to practice. Leadership is about behavior first, skills second. Good leaders gain followers chiefly because people trust and respect them, rather than the skills they possess. Leadership is different from management. Management relies more on planning, organizational, and communications skills. Leadership relies on management skills too, but more so on qualities such as integrity, honesty, humility, courage, commitment, sincerity, passion, confidence, positivity, wisdom, determination, compassion, and sensitivity. Most people do not seek to be leaders. In most cases those who want to be leaders can develop leadership ability.

Effective leaders apply different techniques. Some leaders have one approach, which is right for some situations and wrong for others. Some leaders can adapt and use different leadership styles for given situations. No matter which type of leadership style, there is an important work ethic, which needs to apply in the day-to-day interactions, and knowing the objectives and having a plan how to achieve them. Additionally, building a

team committed to achieving the objectives and helping each team member to give their best efforts is essential to success.

Field Manual 22-100 stresses that leaders must be able to adjust their leadership style to the situation as well as to their subordinates. Leaders are not limited to one style in a given situation and, with the nature of the battlefield today and tomorrow, being able to adapt appropriate styles will influence soldiers' success. Techniques from different styles must motivate people and accomplish the mission. A leader's judgment, intelligence, cultural awareness, and self-control "play major roles in helping you choose the proper style and the appropriate techniques for the task at hand."² General Lucian K. Truscott states:

The characteristic of leadership, any leadership, necessarily has to have certain decisiveness, a certain confidence. In most cases, you will find that decisiveness and confidence come from knowledge based on studies and training.

Chief Joseph described leaders as "a personality that reflected the hardships those tribes such as the Nez Perce endured during contact with Western civilization."³ Understanding this type of personality requires an investigation of the Nez Perce past.

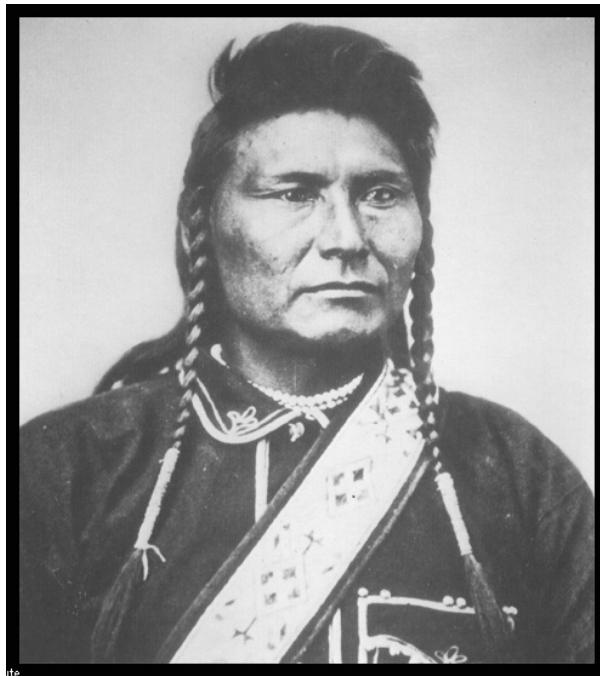


Figure 5. Chief Joseph

Source: Fee, Chester Anders, *Chief Joseph: The Biography of a Great Indian* (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1936).

Heinmot Tooyalakekt (Chief Joseph) was born in present-day eastern Oregon in 1841 to Tu-ya-kas-kas and a Nez Perce woman from the Grande Ronde Valley. Tu-ya-kas-kas was Chief of the Wallamotkin band, which inhabited seven villages in the area. Tu-ya-kas-kas's village was called In-nan-toe-e-in. The tribal elders stated that he could speak some English and that he was half Cayuse and half Nez Perce. He was given the name Hinmaton-Yalaktit (Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt), which means "Thunder Rolling Down the Mountain." However, he was known as Joseph or Joseph the Younger because a Catholic missionary had baptized his father Joseph in 1838. History has lost the Indian name of Chief Joseph's mother, but she was baptized by the Reverend H. H. Spaulding on 14 May 1843, and given the name Arenoth.

The marriage of Tu-ya-kas-kas and Arenoth produced four children. Their first child was a son named Sousouquee, the second was a son named Heinmot Tooyalakekt, the third was a son named Ollokot, and the fourth was a daughter named Ai-ai-tominee. From all accounts, Sousouquee was taller and even more handsome than his younger brothers; he was killed in 1865. Tu-ya-kas-kas accepted Christianity and had his family baptized in 1843. His baptismal name was Joseph; he was also known as Old Joseph. Tu-ya-kas-kas believed in the old Nez Perce traditions. After the signing of the Treaty of 1863, which reduced the size of the reservation, Old Joseph became upset not understanding the division of his people, and took his family to the buffalo country east of the Rockies.⁴

After his father died in 1871, Heinmot Tooyalakekt, now known as Young Joseph, was given the chieftainship of the Wallamotkin band. Numerous observers described him as a tall, straight, and handsome man with a dignified, quiet demeanor. Young Joseph married a Nez Perce woman known as Wa-win-te-pi-ksat. She was the daughter of Chief Whisk-tasket, of the Lapwai area. In 1865, they had a daughter named Kap-kap-on-mi. He later married another Nez Perce woman by the name of Springtime and had a second daughter, who was born at Tepahlewam in 1877.⁵

Throughout his life, Joseph had a total of four wives--the two already mentioned and two others, I-atu-ton-mi and He-yoom-yoyikt. He had a total of nine children--five girls and four boys. All except Kap-kap-on-mi died before the age of two. Kap-kap-on-mi survived the Nez Perce War of 1877 and escaped to Canada. She later returned to Idaho, along with thirteen other Nez Perces, and changed her name to Sarah. On 21 July 1879,

Sarah married a Nez Perce named George Moses. Sarah had no children, and she never saw her father again.⁶ She died some years later. Sarah's mother lived until 1929.

Young Chief Joseph succeeded his father as Chief of the Wallowa band of the Nez Perce. He inherited a volatile situation because some Nez Perce resisted the federal government's efforts to force them onto a small Idaho reservation one-tenth the size of their native lands. In 1877, after the US army threatened to attack, Chief Joseph and other leaders began the journey to the reservation. On a night that Chief Joseph was away from camp, a young Nez Perce man and his friends, avenging the killing of his father, attacked and killed a white settler. Immediately, the cavalry began to pursue Chief Joseph and other Nez Perce, and, although he opposed war, he sided with the war leaders. In 1873, Chief Joseph negotiated with the federal government to ensure his people could stay on their land in the Wallowa Valley as stipulated in 1855 and 1863 land treaties with the US government. However, in 1877, the government reversed policy, and General Oliver O. Howard threatened to attack if the Nez Perce did not relocate to an Idaho reservation. Chief Joseph reluctantly agreed and stood firm for peace and obedience. As for his father's sacred dying charge, Chief Joseph told himself that he would not sign any papers, he would not go of his free will but from compulsion, and this was his excuse. Chief Joseph stated in 1877, "I have tried to save you from suffering and sorrow. Resistance means all of that. We are few. They are many. You can see all we have at a glance. They have food and ammunition in abundance. We must suffer great hardship and loss."⁷

Chief Joseph was great because he was simple and honest. Without education or special training, he demonstrated his ability to lead and to fight when justice demanded. He outgeneraled the best and most experienced commanders in the army of the United

States, although their troops were well provisioned, well armed, and above all unencumbered. Chief Joseph consistently relied upon surprise, ambush, and quick raids. “Before the troops could react, a group of warriors suddenly sprang up from beneath the crest of the bluff and delivered a point-blank volley into them. Some riders fell or were shot from their saddles, the momentum of the charge carrying their mounts to stumble over the bluff,” Private John McAlpine of Company D recalled.⁸ Del “Abe” Jones noted Native American history author stated: “Chief Joseph was great finally, because he never boasted of his remarkable feat. I am proud of him, because he was a true American.”⁹ It is the general belief that Indians are cruel and revengeful, and surely, these people had reason to hate the people that had driven them from their homes. Yet it is a fact that when Joseph met visitors and travelers in the Park, some of whom were women, he allowed them to pass unharmed, and in at least one instance let them have horses. He told me that he gave strict orders to his men not to kill any women or children.¹⁰

Oliver Howard was born in Leeds, Maine. He attended North Yarmouth Academy, was educated at Bowdoin College, and then later attended the US Military Academy, graduating in 1854 as a second lieutenant of ordnance. After two years in the army, he returned to civilian life as a mathematics instructor at West Point. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was commissioned a Colonel in the 3rd Maine Infantry. He commanded a brigade at the First Battle of Bull Run and then joined George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac for the Peninsula Campaign. Throughout his long military career, Oliver Otis Howard gained victory by the force of his own moral convictions as often as by force of arms. Born in Maine in 1830, Howard received his education at Bowdoin College, and then attended West Point, where he became a

mathematics professor in the mid-1850. He was on the verge of switching careers to become a minister when the Civil War erupted. During the war, he commanded troops at First Bull Run, Fair Oaks (where severe wounds forced the amputation of his right arm), Second Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg.¹¹ O. O. Howard stated in 1867:

I led the regiments forward, pressing back the enemy to and across the old road into the camp which General Casey's division had occupied on the Saturday previous. He was in force here, and I advanced to within 30 yards of his line. At this time my horse's leg was broken, and on dismounting, I received a second wound in my right arm, which shattered the bone, disabling me.¹²

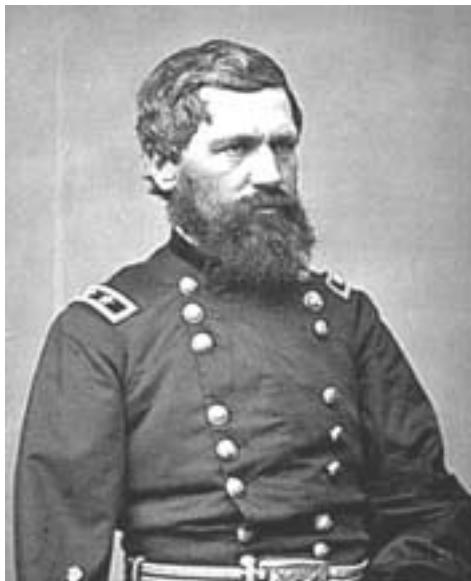


Figure 6. Major General Oliver O. Howard

Source: Howard University, Homepage; available from <http://www.howard.edu>; Internet; accessed on 26 April 2006.

Even in battle Howard was as much a moral crusader as a warrior, insisting that his troops attend prayer and temperance meetings. After the war, he was appointed head of the Freedman's Bureau, which was designed to protect and assist the newly freed

slaves. In this position, Howard quickly earned the contempt of white Southerners and many Northerners for his unapologetic support of black suffrage and his efforts to distribute land to African-Americans. “He was also fearlessly candid about expressing his belief that the majority of white Southerners would be happy to see slavery restored. He even championed freedom and equality for former slaves in his private life, by working to make his elite Washington, District of Columbia, church racially integrated and by helping to found an all-black college in the District of Columbia, which was soon named Howard University in his honor.”¹³

In 1872, Howard brought a similar courage and sense of commitment to the American West when the Grant administration dispatched him to meet with the Chiricahua Apache leader Cochise and bring an end to his decade-long guerilla war against American settlers. Traveling almost alone, Howard entered the Apache chief's stronghold and secured a peace agreement by promising him a reservation of his own choosing. Other generals and public officials condemned what they saw as the overly generous terms of this agreement, but Howard's promise was upheld by an executive order that set aside nearly the whole southeastern corner of the Arizona Territory as a Chiricahua reservation on which Cochise and his people could live with little meddling from the army.¹⁴

Five years later, in 1877, Howard faced a different situation in Oregon, where he was sent to persuade a Nez Perce band, led by Chief Joseph, to leave their homeland in the Wallowa Valley for the reservation assigned to them in Lapwai, Idaho. General O. O. Howard, the Christian soldier, found himself agreeing with Joseph that his people had never signed a treaty giving up their homeland, but in Howard's view this did not change

the fact that eastern Oregon was no longer a place where Indians could roam free.

Howard's own opinion, recorded in an 1876 report, was: "I think it is a great mistake to take from Joseph and his band of Nez Perce Indians that valley . . . and possibly Congress can be induced to let these really peaceable Indians have this poor valley for their own."¹⁵ General Howard was sent to move the Nez Perces to a reservation, no matter what it took. He did just that. The ends justified the means. Howard told the Nez Perce in effect that they had no rights, and no voice in the matter; they had only to obey. Although some of the lesser chiefs counseled revolt without delay, Joseph maintained his self-control, seeking to calm his people, and still groping for a peaceful settlement of their difficulties. He finally asked for thirty days time in which to find and dispose of their stock, and this was granted. Emily FitzGerald stated:

There is a big tent pitched on the parade ground, and in and around it, squatted on the ground, are about a hundred Indians in the most gorgeous get-ups you can imagine. General Howard and his aides, the Indian Agent, and several of the officers of the post in full uniform are inside talking with Joseph. The outside line of Indians around the tent consists almost entirely of squaws and papooses.¹⁶

After his offer to purchase the valley was rejected, Howard made it clear that he would use force to move the Nez Perce as he had been commanded. And despite his sympathies for Joseph's band, he did not hesitate to send his troops against them when Nez Percé warriors killed several white settlers in the area. Nonetheless, Howard never lost sight of the underlying moral issue in this confrontation, and after Joseph's surrender, he was outspoken among those officers who argued without success that Joseph's band should be allowed to return to their home.¹⁷

Howard's military career after the Nez Perce War included serving as superintendent of West Point for several years and as the commanding officer of the

Department of the Platte and the Division of the East. In his later years and after his retirement from the Army in 1894, he wrote several books on military and Indian affairs, including *Nez Percé Joseph* (1881), *Autobiography* (1907), *My Life and Experiences Among Hostile Indians* (1907), and *Famous Indian Chiefs I Have Known* (1908). Howard died in 1909.

Chief Joseph and General O. O. Howard had different leadership techniques, yet both were effective. In all accounts written on both leaders, they exhibited moral values and used ethical decision making at all times. At the beginning of the chapter, the discussion centered on three effective leadership criteria. First, know your objectives and have a plan how to achieve them. Second, building a team committed to achieving the objectives. Third, help team member to give their best efforts. Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce were not only fighting for their way of life, but for their lives. They knew that to be successful they would need to get to the Canadian border. He beat Colonel S. B. Gibbons with 15 officers, 146 troopers, and 34 volunteers, though with loss of men. Chief Joseph stampeded General Howard's horses and pack-train, fought Colonel Samuel Sturgis on the Yellowstone River, losing many horses, and came very near making good his retreat to Canada. The Nez Perce thrived on a system of teamwork and were very productive.¹⁸

General Howard, on the other hand, knew what he needed to accomplish and had plans to achieve them. General Howard's success would not threaten him or his soldier's way of life if the Nez Perce were not stopped before crossing in Canada. The Nez Perce had more to lose whereas the only effect on the US cavalry might be promotion or quality of life. General Howard was willing to use everything he deemed necessary to accomplish his goal, even war. His soldiers were well disciplined and helped them attain

a high quality of teamwork. Related to teamwork, a lack of trust is a problem in many workplaces. If leaders never identified their values in these workplaces, the mistrust is understandable. People do not know what they can expect. If leaders have identified and shared their values, and then live these values daily, they will create trust. General Howard's soldiers and Chief Joseph's tribe members knew and trusted their leader and their leaders' abilities.

Many of the same leadership skills Howard and Joseph used still apply in today's complex security environment. In Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Europe, across the Americas, and across the full spectrum of operations, the actions of individual Soldiers and leaders have had strategic consequences. Today's top US Army leadership recognizes the needs for contemporary leaders to be more adaptable, flexible, and ready for the array of challenges ahead. They expect a new breed of leader--one more akin to the pentathlete that is able to rapidly transition between complex tasks with relative ease.¹⁹

The future environment will demand that Army leaders at all levels be multi-skilled, innovative, agile, and versatile. Therefore, the Army is continuing to develop training and education systems to grow adaptive civilian and military leaders who are comfortable in leading during times of change and uncertainty. Above all else, this type of leadership becomes increasingly difficult as warfare becomes more complex. In these circumstances, leaders must identify and prioritize their many challenges.

One example of a current challenge facing leaders in Iraq is the "will of the people." Often the enemy in Iraq presents an ideology the populace embraces. That ideology evolves into a unique and important weapon to be used on the populace and indirectly against the US. Influencing the population becomes a race between the

insurgency and the military to win their support and fulfill their needs. During these times, leadership is key, and leaders must be able to adapt to these non-standard weapons of war and unforeseen circumstances. They must draw on their wide range of skills and overcome any threat. Another historical example is this arena is that of the Malaya emergency. During this conflict, insurgents wanted free elections that the British colonists did not oversee. The British counteracted the insurgency by providing free elections to the populace with limited oversight appealing to their desires without forfeiting their stronghold. Eventually, the populace began supporting the British, diffusing the situation and ridding the insurgent threat. The British in Malaya is one example in which the leadership innovatively and correctly identified the center of gravity for the populace and the insurgency. With this knowledge, the British military then countered the insurgency while still appealing to the populace proving extremely successful in the long-term outcome.

In recent wars and counterinsurgencies, the will of the people played a significant role. In every case, measuring this will have been an extreme challenge. Linking this to the US cavalry, the Nez Perce conflict of old, it is clear that the will of the Chief Joseph's people was strong and much more persistent than their enemies. Chief Joseph was resilient and tried every possible appeal to the federal authorities to return the Nez Perce to the land of their ancestors. Chief Joseph summed up exactly the will of his people: "All men were made brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who was born free should be contented when penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases."²⁰ Howard failed, as a leader, to understand the will of the Nez Perce.

In contrast, today's leaders, by understanding and knowing the will of the people, will be more effective and save lives.

Leaders today must identify and address the ideologies of the populaces they deal with and properly address them. The US cavalry missed this opportunity. The Nez Perce, rather than ownership, considered themselves as having the right of occupancy to their lands. With possession of their lands, they maintained rights to defend it, levy fees against intruders, and consider the creatures within their private domain. The Nez Perce could, and did, grant or withhold to traders the privilege of settling upon, and sometimes traveling through their land. Appealing to the Nez Perce and working for a compromise, the US Cavalry could have appeased them and played to their will in order to produce a more effective solution. Instead, they faced months of their strong will and prolonged a situation that could have been dealt with more swiftly. Leaders today must not make these same mistakes.

There seems to be modern progress in this area with both the US and its allies. The Prime Minister of Great Britain understands the will of the Iraqi people when he stated: "The regime of Saddam is gone, the bulk of Iraq is under coalition control, and the vast majority of Iraqis are rejoicing at Saddam's departure. We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, for their great civilization and for the religious faiths, they practice. We have no ambition in Iraq, except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people."²¹ President Bush stated: "Don't believe for one second that these people do not want us there. I have met many, many people from Iraq that want us there, and in a bad way. They say they will never see the freedoms we talk about but they hope their children will. We are doing a good job in Iraq there are good things happening."²²

Consider this comment from a soldier working among the Iraq people: “The greatest fear of the man on the street is that the Americans will tire and leave. We pray that they stay and stay forever” is the feeling of the vast majority but they look both ways before they say it.²³

It is vital that leaders understand that the will of one is not the will of another. Battlefield leaders today and in the future will face unforeseen challenges and resilient enemies. From history’s lessons and today’s training, they must constantly strive for success. They must succeed for their own soldiers and for the population in the countries within which they serve. A failure in either area will challenge mission success. Effectiveness to both sides will produce immediate and, more importantly, long-term success. This is the goal, and modern leaders must not fail.

It can now be easily seen that the Nez Perce and the US cavalry aspects of leadership, along with weapons and tactics and logistics, all provide valuable lessons for today’s military. Chapter 5 will further examine how these lessons learned apply even more today. In doing so, the examination will highlight the additional aspects of culture, will of the people, and man-hunting procedures. Expanding on these factors, one can develop a greater understanding why the Army often failed to accomplish its mission to defeat hostile Indians, but more importantly gain insight from history on how to better prosecute the current GWOT and counterinsurgency operations.

¹William S. McFeeley, *Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen*, ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 11.

²Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1999), 3.

³Alan Osburne, “The Exile of the Nez Perce in Indian Territory, 1878-1885,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* (1978-1979): 56.

⁴Chester Anders Fee, *Chief Joseph: The Biography of a Great Indian* (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1936), 55.

⁵Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), 72.

⁶Allen P. Slickpoo, Sr., and Deward E. Walker, Jr., *Noon Nee-Me-Poo (We, the Nez Perces: Culture and History of the Nez Perces* (Idaho: Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, 1973), 4.

⁷Chief Joseph and Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Chief Joseph's Own Story in Northwestern Fights and Fighters* (Garden City, 1913), 48-75.

⁸Charles K. Bucknam, and G.H. Snow, Interview, *New York Herald*, 11 October 1877.

⁹Del “Abe” Jones, Native American Historian and Author of e-book, *The World, War, Freedom and More*, October, 2003; available from <http://www.iwvpa.net/jonesd/>; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

¹⁰Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Auto Tours; available from <http://www.fs.fed.us/npnht/autotours>; Internet; accessed on 6 October 2005.

¹¹McFeeley, 14.

¹²Oliver O. Howard, “The True Story of the Wallowa Campaign,” *The North American Review* (1879), 68.

¹³Howard University, Homepage; available from <http://www.howard.edu>; Internet; accessed on 26 April 2006.

¹⁴John H Eicher, and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 71.

¹⁵Duncan McDonald, *The Nez Perce War of 1877: Indian History from Indian Sources* (Deer Lodge, MT: New Northwest, 1878-79).

¹⁶Fitzgerald, 22.

¹⁷Greene, 10.

¹⁸*New York Herald*, 10 September 1877.

¹⁹Department of the Army, A Strategic Framework; available from www.heritage.org/Press/Events/upload/102005Harvey.ppt; Internet; accessed on 19 September 2005.

²⁰Brainy Quote, Homepage; available from www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/chief_joseph.html; Internet; accessed on 23 October 2005.

²¹Steven Philip Kramer, “Blair’s Britain After Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2003), 112.

²²The White House, President Bush Addresses the Nation, 19 March 2003; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>; Internet; Accessed on 8 June 2006.

²³Ray Reynolds, Sergeant First Class, Iowa Army National Guard. E-mail letter, April 2004; available from http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_ray_reynolds.htm; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006. Emailed letter written while on leave from duty in Iraq notes positive developments in that country since the start of the war.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Irregular Warfare is more intellectual than a bayonet charge.

T. E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia¹

Superior thinking has always overwhelmed superior force.

Marine Corps Recruiting Poster

Like cancers, insurgencies are seldom afforded the seriousness they deserve, especially early in the development when they are most vulnerable. The tendency is to deny or underestimate the threat, or to believe that killing or capturing only a few of the most obvious rebel leaders will solve the problem. In fact, the problem, the heart of an insurgency, lies deeper. One must remember that the insurgent's goal is to strike fear, not anger, in the population. Fairness and justice have little meaning. Insurgents try to influence individuals causing them to have difficulty in distinguishing truth from propaganda or local rumor. In the modern Iraqi chapter, the US government has assumed that as long as the coalition provides basic services and evidence of economic and political progress, the Iraqis would tolerate coalition forces. This has not proven true. Even in areas where services have been restored to prewar levels, resentment at outside occupation is escalating.

The first rule of combat is to never underestimate ones enemy. One could easily replace the word Iraq with Nez Perce in the preceding paragraph. In the Nez Perce tribe, family and culture were essential to their existence. An estimate of the Indian tribes suggests they were willing to live with the newcomers until relations were strained by

continual immigration into their land, loss of resources, disease, and other pressures.

Most Indians were not considered to be American citizens since they owed their political allegiance to their tribe rather than the United States; “The United States sought to achieve two goals. The first was to open as much western land as possible to white settlement with a minimum of bloodshed. The second was to assimilate Native American peoples into American society.”² Unfortunately, these two goals were not necessarily compatible. Initially the Nez Perce welcomed the newcomers but as the steady stream of immigrants arrived, pressures on lands and resources began. Certainly, there were cultural differences between Indians and the settlers, but in the beginning there existed diplomacy, communication, and consideration. After time, settlers began to take land the US government had offered but did not own. The Nez Perce were faced with encroachment of their lands and enforced their laws as dictated through their traditions and cultural practices. In some instances, the Nez Perce actions were defensive and aggressive and the US Government viewed this as hostile. Otto von Bismark once stated that “Fools say they learn from experience; I prefer to learn from the experience of others.”³ Logistics of the Nez Perce and US cavalry during their conflict included the aspects of food and transportation. The Nez Perce were very successful and superior to the US cavalry because they seasonally migrated throughout their territory in order to take advantage of various resources. This technique was part of their culture. The US cavalry, on the other hand, were reliant on and used domesticated forms of food for sustenance and cumbersome logistics trains. Logistics was identified as the “center of gravity” for the US cavalry. Improper use of mobility and the non-use of available transportation methods such as the rivers and railroads proved detrimental to the US

cavalry. Currently, logistics is an area the insurgents take advantage. This is an area the US military needs to learn from. The insurgents are effective in their use of simple logistical trains, similar to that of the Nez Perce. Currently the US military in Iraq is learning to be innovative and flexible in the transportation of logistics.

Weapons and tactics will always play a vital role in the success or failure in war. While today's US military technology is progressing at lightning speed, there are still many lessons to be learned from simple wars, even wars on their own land. The Nez Perce lesson learned show that often adaptive and effective tactics can defeat technologically superior weapons. If the US Cavalry had possessed this knowledge, they would have countered Nez Perce tactics much earlier and not focused on just their specific skills. This still holds true today. Modern insurgents use simplistic weapons such as the AK-47, rocket propelled grenades and IEDs. It takes the understanding of the simple weapons to combat them in ones quest to defeat them.

So what lessons can the US military learn from this experience in American history, and what steps can be taken to prevent mistakes? This paper identifies three areas for continued emphasis and link history's lessons with today's modern fight. These three areas are: will of the people, culture, and man hunting procedures and are all related to the three major topics of this paper; logistics, weapons and tactics, and leadership.

Will of the people is now recognized as an important aspect of war. How does one measure the "will" of the people? In his State of the Union Address 20 January 2004, President Bush states:

The whole world is seeing that the car bombers and assassins are not only fighting coalition forces, they are trying to destroy the hopes of Iraqis, expressed in free

elections. And the whole world now knows that a small group of extremists will not overturn the will of the Iraqi people.⁴

Following “Operation Anaconda,” the recorded after-action review states that the main issue was the US military’s underestimation of the will of the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces. Will of the people generates power, strength, and resistance. In many counterinsurgency fights, such as modern conflicts with the Taliban and Iraqi insurgents, the will of the people is considered a center of gravity. What is significant about this? Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 (Draft), *Doctrine for Joint Planning Operations*, clearly states the critical role of center of gravity analysis, “The most important task confronting campaign planners in this process is being able to identify friendly and adversary strategic centers of gravity; that is, the sources of strength, power, and resistance.” Locating the enemy’s centers of gravity should be the first agenda of the strategist.

Attacking the wrong centers of gravity could lead to enormous costs, human and material. The following research material attempts to give war planners and strategists adequate doctrinal knowledge on selecting the enemy’s centers of gravity that could be applicable to both conventional or insurgency wars. Today, the concept of center of gravity is discussed only in the classroom, seldom in the war room.⁵

The insurgents--whether they are with terrorist ringleader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda, or former Sunni regime elements--have tried and failed to undermine Iraq’s key “centers of gravity,” Colonel Osgood observed. According to the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, the first center of gravity is the coalition, which has remained firm and steadfast; the Iraqi security forces, which have grown, both in size and capability, are the second; and Iraqi civilians who support the move to democracy make up the third.⁶ If the US army could remove the terrorists’ base of support, it has to convince ordinary Muslims that this is a war against terrorists, not

against Islam. This point seems obvious, but it is not obvious to the average citizen in the Middle East with only religious and tribal education, who gets little news except anti-Western propaganda, and are just hostile to modern civilization.

With respect to culture, it is paramount that the US government effectively reiterates its strict neutrality on religious matters and that it supports complete freedom of worship for all Muslims. This will hopefully influence the people of Iraq that the coalition is cognizant of their culture and respects it. In studying behavior, US military and political leaders should examine customs, material culture artifacts, tools, technology, and language both directly and “indirectly.” To adopt this new emphasis concerning culture, the US army, specifically, power projection platforms such as Fort Drum, New York, are training many units before deploying. Replica cities are erected, complete with road signs in Arabic. Culture is mutually constructed through a constant process of social interaction. Building rapport with the local populace is essential. An example of this is Special Forces soldiers at the Command and General Staff College are learning how to ride and pack military equipment and weapons on horses.



Figure 7. How to Pack Equipment on Horses
Source: Leavenworth Lamp, March 2006.

The American military is equipped with the most technically advanced weapon systems, yet it is a lack of skill with horses that caused them to be ridiculed in 2001 by their Afghan counterparts. For instance, knowledge of horses and mules as a modern day force multiplier or wartime asset would have given them instant credibility with the locals. It is two cultures working together--the high-technology Western civilization working symbiotically with ancient Eastern culture--toward a common goal. One solution is that one has to change its understanding and approach to other cultures, one has to change its processes, adapt to new technologies, or may this author suggest intermingle old technologies with the new. All the while, one must have an adaptive mindset to the culture, and flexible philosophy toward war fighting.



Figure 8. Special Force Team on Horseback

Source: The United States Army Special Operations Command, "Afghanistan," USASOC News Service, 13 June 2002.

In an interview with Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha 595, the following statement indicates the value of such knowledge:

But, four- or three-man teams can move quickly can move by horseback. You can't put a tank on the back of a horse. You can't put helicopters on the back of a horse. But you can a couple of skinny SF guys on the back of horses, and we can take the fight to the enemy. So, I know that lots of lives were saved. I know that an incredible amount of money was saved in supporting 12 men as opposed to a thousand-man task force of armor, and artillery, and infantry, and aviation assets that would have had to go, and been used to fight these guys.

The United States is fighting a determined, resourceful, and dangerously adaptive enemy. The US military too must be adaptive. Enforcing its ideologies upon a culture that

is not ready, may take years to take hold. In reference to the Nez Perce, the will of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce were highly under-rated. They were struggling for survival and their determination to maintain their culture. Eventually, along with many other factors, pressure from the US military overtook their will and decimated their center of gravity.

Was the US Army aware of the culture of the Nez Perce or did they simply outlive the Nez Perce by pushing them from place to place? Was culture important? Yes, by respecting the culture of the Nez Perce, less lives, resources, and material would have been lost. One of the better books on the US Army's role in counter-guerrilla warfare against the Indians and Native American culture is Andrew J. Birtle's, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*. This book is issued to all students of the Command and General Staff College because of its special emphasis on culture and counterinsurgency. It includes some interesting and relevant sections entitled "Indian Warfare and Military Thought," "US Army Counter-guerrilla Operations on the Western Frontier," and "The Army and Indian Pacification." Birtle describes one of the few manuals published during the era on how to operate on the Plains, *The Prairie Traveler*, as "perhaps the single most important work on the conduct of frontier expeditions published under the aegis of the War Department."⁷ Captain Randolph Marcy's *The Prairie Traveler* was a "how-to" manual for packing, traveling, tracking, and bivouacking on the Plains. More important, it was also a primer on fighting the Indians. He arrives at three lessons. First, over-dispersion strips the counterinsurgent force of initiative, increases its vulnerability, and saps its morale. Secondly, mobility is imperative, and mule mounted-infantry was one way to increase mobility. Employing mobile mounted forces at night is the best way to counter an elusive guerrilla force and

employ surprise to the enemy at dawn. The *Prairie Traveler* conveys one central message that is still salient and germane today: it urges soldiers to be adaptive by coupling conventional discipline with the self-reliance, individuality, rapid mobility of the insurgent and know the enemy's culture.

Army Special Forces have been operating in northern Afghanistan to coordinate with the Northern Alliance, a coalition comprised primarily of ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks. This alliance has proved to be invaluable. The US cavalry extensively used Indian Scouts during the 19th century. They had the ability to track, find water, and most importantly they knew the terrain and enemy. They knew the tactics, techniques, and procedure the opposing tribe used but only because these Indian Scouts were specifically chosen because they knew the current enemy. Not any Indian Scouts would do. They were familiar with the weapons system Indians used and their capabilities. Often times they would give advise to military leaders, only to have their advice dismissed. For example, Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer was warned numerous times by his Indian Scouts, much to his chagrin. They knew their culture. However mistakes were made; Lieutenant Colonel Custer hired Indian Scouts that were Crow and Rhee. They came from Arizona and Texas. Their ability to perform the task of scout was greatly degraded due to the fact that they came from a different culture. Culture is a "mental blueprint" a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs, and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behavior. Many Americans viewed Indian scouts as traitors and not well liked. Additionally, American trader such as the famous Jim Bridger, Wild Bill Cody, and others were also used as scouts because of their wide-ranging knowledge of the Native

Americans. The modern day warrior must not make the same mistake. The Iraq people have many different cultures as well, not similar.

The US government has no academic research on how to pursue PONIs. Using “find, fix, finish, exploit and analyze” as the common steps to the apprehension of such PONIs, the US government is not very proficient job with the “find.”

There are many reasons for such inability. First, legal political constraints limit freedom of action. Additionally, there are other factors that impede success. No single organization exists as the single point of contact. No coordinated target list of PONIs exists between interagency partners. In the 1870s, communications technology was very limited. There was not a coordinated target list; this problem still exists today. Different agencies have different target lists reducing effectiveness and to “find” the PONIs. Two Special Operations Officers, Major Steve Marks and Major Mat Nilson, attended the Naval Post Graduate School where they researched resolutions to these existing challenges. Their observations follow. After a great deal of coordination and several conferences with the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Scotland Yard, and the British Special Air Service, they followed a line of investigation that suggests the following steps. First, we must move from a (to use a sports analogy) zone defense to a man to man. Subject matter experts are essential and must have an intimate knowledge of the PONIs. General O. O. Howard of the US Cavalry did know of Chief Joseph, yet he lacked an intimate knowledge of his background. People in a society live and think in ways that form definite patterns.⁸

The focus of this work examined lessons learned in a historical case study from the Nez Perce. It has clearly answered the question of whether the US military, in today’s

counterinsurgency and GWOT operations, can learn valuable lessons from the Nez Perce-US cavalry conflicts of the past? Logistics, transportation and leadership are all-important, but the most damaging evidence points to the facts that the US military performed an inadequate examination of the will of the people, culture-alliances, and man hunting. Studying the Nez Perce, as one of the last holdouts, and who stood in the way of US western expansion, helps one develop a greater understanding for why the Army often failed to accomplish its mission to defeat hostile Indians. Secondly, examining past battles, engagements, and campaigns such as the Nez Perce can benefit its success in future wars, such as the current action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today's leaders do have access to lessons of the past, so to disregard them is foolish. The lessons from both the Nez Perce and US Cavalry sides, with respect to weapons and tactics, both positive and negative, must be leveraged for modern success on the battlefield. Today's GWOT and counterinsurgency fights are too important to neglect history's lessons. Failure is not an option and military leaders must heed such lessons to posture themselves for success and crush the enemy. Many of these same tactics now plague the US in its unconventional fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of the same tactics the US military used over a century ago continue to be useful against unconventional forces. In the ongoing GWOT and extended operations, the US must use every available source of study and historical lessons in search of ways to better its success. The study of the Nez Perce conflict provides some of those learned lessons and answers possible to today's fight and help modern leaders in mission accomplishment. Linking the past to the present is the key to historical studies, and there is no more important time than now when our nation is at war

¹Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography* (United Kingdom: N. Helari Ltd., 1989), 3.

²Robert Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1890* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 178.

³Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 7.

⁴The White House, State of the Union Address, 20 January 2004; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040120-7.html>; Internet; accessed on 8 June 2006.

⁵Colonel John Osgood, USA, “A Study of Clausewitz’s Concept of the Military Center of Gravity,” 1998; available from <http://www.lexixa.com/mil/wc4.htm>; Internet; accessed on 9 June 2006.

⁶General Richard Myers, Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force, *New York Times* 29 May 2005.

⁷Randolph B. Marcy, Captain, USA, *The Prairie Traveler*, Published by authority of the war department, 1859, 17. A handbook for overland expeditions with maps, illustrations and itineraries of the principal routes between the Mississippi and the pacific.

⁸Nilson; and Marks.

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